

by funneling money through the children of rich donors.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that if we try to swallow campaign finance reform whole instead of taking smaller bites, we ultimately choke. Instead, we should adopt what I believe this is, a more realistic and commonsense approach to focus on getting the job done. That is what I think the American people want, and that is what my bill offers. Again, three steps, if the camera can pick this up, one, two, and three, that is all there is to it, but it goes a long way, I believe, toward commonsense reform, reform we can do now. I urge my colleagues to become cosponsors.

THE HONG KONG REVERSION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, in less than 5 months nearly a century of British rule will end and Hong Kong will become a special administrative region of China. Nobody knows exactly what will happen in Hong Kong on that night or in ensuing months and years. This reversion is unprecedented in its complexity.

Hong Kong, one of the world's most efficient economies, will become part of an emerging giant that has yet to integrate itself fully into the world economy and the international community and which has only begun to experiment with democracy at the village level.

The United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China have largely agreed upon the basic rules for Hong Kong's reversion in the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984. For its part, China has agreed to grant Hong Kong more autonomy than international law requires.

In Hong Kong's Constitution, the basic law of 1989, the National People's Congress unveiled a one-country, two-system arrangement for 50 years. During that time, Hong Kong is supposed to enjoy a high degree of autonomy, except in the areas of foreign affairs and defense.

It is rumored that over 7,000 journalists from around the world will be on hand at midnight on June 30, 1997, to witness the official handover. Presumably those journalists will be there to observe whether the transition goes smoothly. Already the press coverage in Hong Kong has become intense.

In large part, the attention focused on Hong Kong by the international press has been fueled by misguided or heavy-handed efforts by the Chinese Government to disband the current legislative council and replace it with the provisional legislature, to alter civil rights protections in Hong Kong, and to improperly influence the extremely efficient and extraordinarily important civil service of Hong Kong.

Today, with a number of colleagues, I am introducing the Hong Kong Rever-

sion Act that will aid Congress in wading through all of the important issues and this complex transition by building on the Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992. It will require assessments and reports by the Secretary of State in very specific areas so that the President can determine whether to maintain current United States law and policies involving Hong Kong.

In addition, I am especially pleased to report that a team of specialists from the Library of Congress, led by Kerry Dumbaugh, has, at my request, just completed an excellent comprehensive report entitled "Hong Kong's Reversion to China: Implications for the United States." This excellent report will also greatly assist the Congress in this important task, so I am allowing the Library of Congress to make this report publicly available today.

Mr. Speaker, this Member invites the cosponsorship and support of this legislation by any and all of my colleagues. Original cosponsors include the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HAMILTON], the gentleman from California [Mr. BERMAN], the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON], the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BARRETT], the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER], the gentleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA], the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. CRANE], the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. KOLBE], and the gentleman from California [Mr. COX].

TRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLE OF LITHUANIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. SHIMKUS] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the people of Lithuania, who, through tireless perseverance, are celebrating their independence on Sunday, February 16.

Referred to as the crossroads of Europe, with the geographical center of Europe just to the north of the capital of Vilnius, Lithuania is a fascinating and diverse country rich in history and tradition. I am proud to be a descendant of a Lithuanian immigrant to the United States. My great grandfather, Casper Shimkus, came to this country in hopes of finding the American Dream. It is my pleasure to carry on his name and his Lithuanian heritage, a heritage strong in work ethic, personal responsibility, and the ability to overcome adversity.

As Americans, there are certain rights we take for granted, all of which can be found in our Bill of Rights. Lithuanians have struggled for these rights, a struggle which has expanded the centuries.

Since the founding of the first Lithuanian state in 1236, Lithuania has

been occupied by czarist Russia for a majority of the time, an occupation which lasted continuously from 1795 to 1915. During that time, the people of Lithuania were subjected to many hardships, including being unable to use the Latin alphabet, lack of religious freedom, and desecration of their cultural identity.

With the collapse of czarist Russia at the end of World War I, Lithuanians took advantage of the opportunity to regain their independence. On February 16, 1918, the Lithuanian National Council met and declared the restoration of Lithuania's independence. After defending itself against foreign armies traveling across the territory after the war, by the early 1920's Lithuania was a free nation rebuilding its own political culture and economic life.

This freedom was short-lived for the Lithuanian people. On August 23, 1939, the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany entered into a pact which placed Lithuania in the Soviets' sphere of influence. On June 15, 1940, in violation of international law, the Soviet Union invaded Lithuania. The occupation by the Soviet Union lasted for about 1 year until Nazi Germany forced the Soviets out and then occupied this country.

□ 1545

It was during the next 3 years of Nazi occupation that most of Lithuania's 200,000 Jewish citizens were murdered. After the fall of Nazi Germany, the Soviets stepped in and again occupied Lithuania. However, the idea of an independent Lithuania never died. In the late 1980's, as changes were taking place throughout the Soviet Union, Lithuanians organized a powerful independence movement.

After four decades of suppression of their culture and heritage, the Lithuanian people rose up in peaceful protest. The continued protest and push for independence finally culminated in 1990, with proindependence candidates winning a clear majority in elections to the Parliament of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. On March 11, 1990, the reestablishment of an independent Lithuanian State was proclaimed. After a final, unsuccessful coup attempt by a few Soviet military units in 1991, Lithuania took its rightful place in the international community as a vibrant, independent country.

Now led by a parliamentary democracy, the determined Lithuanian people are beginning to feel the full benefits of freedom, religious freedom, a taste of democracy, and movement toward an effective free market economy. The United States must lend its full support to not only Lithuania, but to all the Baltic States now. This is not the time for our administration to waver on its position toward the Baltics.

With the instability of the political situation in Russia, it is in the long-term interest of the United States to promote democracy and free markets